

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

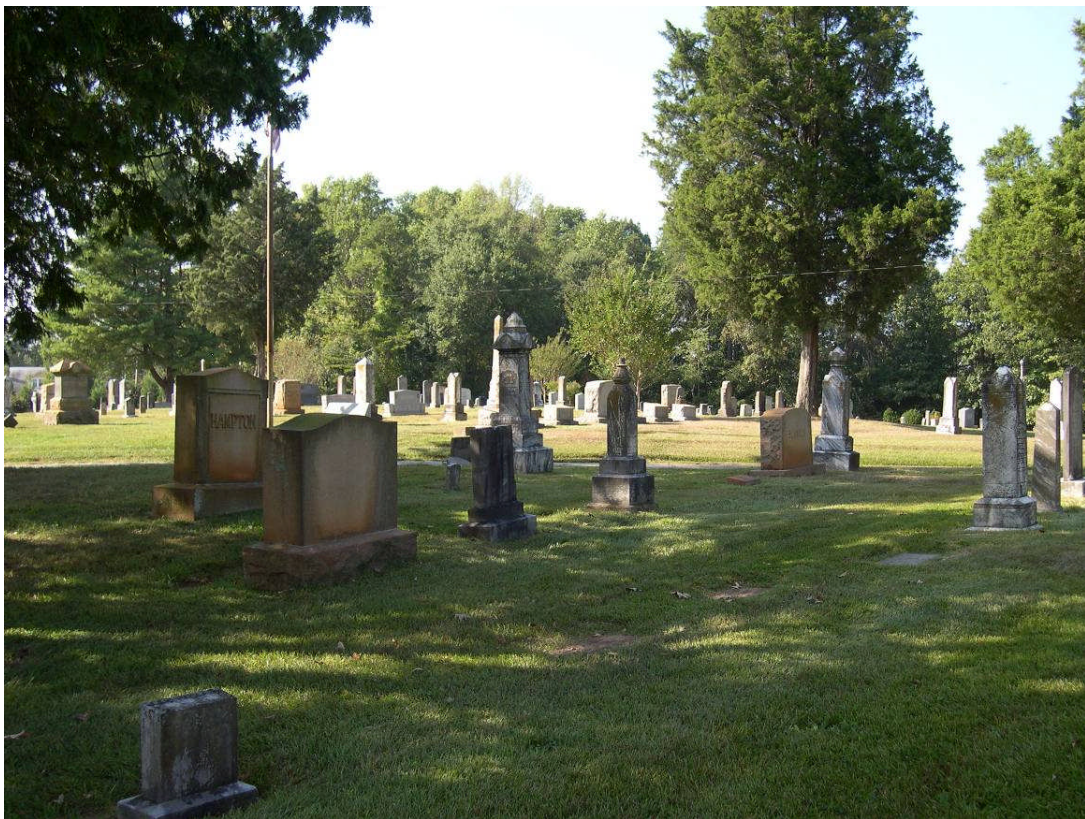
West Main Street Historic District

Forest City, Rutherford County, RF0447, Listed 12/20/2006
Nomination by Heather Fearnbach
Photographs by Heather Fearnbach, September 2005





419 West Main Street



Cool Springs Cemetery

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name West Main Street Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 121 Cool Springs Drive, 343-499 West Main Street, 121 Memorial Drive **N/A** not for publication

city or town Forest City **N/A** vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Rutherford code 161 zip code 28043

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined eligible for the
National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

- ☐ removed from the National
Register.

- ☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

West Main Historic District

Name of Property

Rutherford County, NC

County and State

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
27	4	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
29	4	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

EDUCATION: School

FUNERARY: Cemetery

RELIGION: Religious Facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Sports Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Secondary Structure

EDUCATION: Administration

FUNERARY: Cemetery

RELIGION: Religious Facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Sports Facility

COMMERCE/TRADE: Service Station

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/Craftsman

Colonial Revival

Classical Revival

Spanish Colonial Revival

Modern Movement

OTHER: Mediterranean Revival

OTHER: Ranch

OTHER: Dutch Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

BRICK

STUCCO

roof ASPHALT

METAL

other SYNTHETICS: Vinyl

ASBESTOS

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

West Main Street Historic District
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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☒ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Art

Period of Significance

1867-1958

Significant Dates

1867

1924

1958

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Asbury, Louis Humbert (architect)

Harrill, Chivous Gilmer (architect)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☒ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

West Main Street Historic District
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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 27 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>420300</u>	<u>3910840</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>17</u>	<u>420840</u>	<u>3910980</u>

3	<u>17</u>	<u>420980</u>	<u>3910980</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u>17</u>	<u>420700</u>	<u>3910520</u>

☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Heather Fearnbach
organization Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. date 11/15/2005
street & number 3334 Nottingham Road telephone 336-765-2661
city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27104

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Multiple Owners
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Park Service

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West Main Street Historic District
Rutherford County, NC

7. Narrative Description

The West Main Street Historic District encompasses an intact concentration of historic properties two blocks west of downtown Forest City in Rutherford County, North Carolina. The largely linear district contains twenty-two primary resources located on approximately twenty-seven acres on both sides of West Main Street from just east of Wingo Street to Gettys Street on the west: the 1867 Cool Springs Cemetery, fifteen early to mid-twentieth century residences, the 1924-1925 Cool Springs High School (NR 1999), the 1940 First Presbyterian Church, the 1950 Harrill Marker on the Cool Springs High School front lawn, the 1958 Cool Springs Gymnasium, a 1964 Crown service station and a 1965 medical office building. Modern commercial development separates the West Main Street Historic District from First Baptist Church (NR 1989) and the Main Street Historic District (NR 2002) to the east. The western edge of the district is bordered by modern fast food restaurants, gas stations and commercial buildings. The Norfolk Southern Railroad runs behind the buildings on the south side of West Main Street.

The north lot lines of the Lovelace-Ragin House (450 West Main Street), First Presbyterian Church (438 West Main Street), the Cool Springs Gymnasium (121 Memorial Drive) and the Cool Springs Cemetery (121 Cool Springs Drive) on the north side of West Main Street form the district's northern boundary. Wingo Street and the east side of the house lot at 343 West Main Street constitute the eastern boundary, and the south lot lines of properties on the south side of West Main Street delineate the southern boundary. The western side of the Harrill-Wilkins (499 West Main Street) and the Lovelace-Ragin house lots create the western boundary of the district.

Most of the land south of West Main Street is devoted to single-family residential use interspersed with some recent and historic multi-family housing. Commercial development has encroached on the eastern and western edges of the district, and some residences have been converted into offices. The properties in the West Main Street Historic District are sited on large lots, with even modest dwellings having spacious front, side and rear yards. Some houses are situated on full basements, taking advantage of the topography. Setback from the public right-of-way is deeper on the north side of West Main Street, where the Lovelace-Ragin House, First Presbyterian Church and Cool Springs High School are all located well away from the road. Most properties are shaded by mature deciduous and evergreen trees, and foundation and ornamental plantings are prevalent throughout the district. Concrete sidewalks connect this section of West Main Street to downtown.

The earliest resource in the locally significant West Main Street Historic District is Cool Springs Cemetery, established in 1867 as the burial ground for Cool Springs Baptist Church (the frame church stood on land that is now encompassed in the cemetery; the Baptist congregation moved approximately 5/8 of a mile across the street to 301 West Main in 1915). The cemetery contains eight sections, the oldest of which

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appears to be Section 4, surrounded by Rose, Hardin and Ridge Drives. A system of asphalt driveways winds through a significant array of modest granite and marble gravemarkers and monuments, particularly obelisks, characteristic of Christian burial grounds dating to the Victorian era.

The West Main Street Historic District encompasses an eclectic mix of nationally popular residential styles common in the first half of the twentieth century, ranging from modest one-story bungalows to two-story Neoclassical, Colonial and Mediterranean Revival dwellings. Weatherboard, German siding and brick are the most common exterior sheathing materials, although one house is stuccoed and one is covered with vinyl siding. Two historic duplexes stand among the single-family homes. Detached garages and sheds accompany some residences. Most garages are one-story, frame buildings, but the two-story brick garage/apartment behind the Lovelace-Ragin House was built to complement the dwelling.

The earliest houses in the West Main Street Historic District date to the 1910s. The circa 1910 Frank B. and Mae Bridges Wilkins House at 363 West Main Street is one of the most imposing residences in Forest City. A monumental tetrastyle portico supported by Tuscan columns on plinths projects from the façade of the two-story, hip-roofed, Neoclassical Revival dwelling. The McDaniel House, constructed at 381 West Main Street in 1913, is a two-story, transitional Queen Anne/Colonial Revival house with a gable-on-hip roof and a wraparound porch supported by paneled square posts.

Several bungalows stand on the south side of West Main Street, and even some of the plainest dwellings, like the circa 1930 duplex at 355-357 West Main, manifest Craftsman elements such as square brick porch posts, four-over-one window sash and exposed rafter ends. The Clarence Arthur and Mary Bowles McDaniel House, constructed at 373 West Main Street in 1930, is an intact frame bungalow with a front-gable roof and a full-width inset porch supported by tapered posts on brick piers.

The influence of the Colonial Revival style is evident in the West Main Street neighborhood from the 1920s through the 1950s. The 1925, two-story-on-basement, brick Biggerstaff-Griffin House at 399 West Main Street features Colonial Revival elements such as a projecting central pedimented bay, a single-leaf entry framed by sidelights and a transom, lunettes in the front and west gables, a modillion cornice and end chimneys. The pervasiveness of the Colonial Revival style through the post-World War II era is manifested in the one-story, brick, Ranch house at 487 West Main Street, where the front entry is embellished with a broken pediment surround.

Other variations of the Colonial Revival style—including the Dutch and Spanish Colonial Revival—are also present. The 1928 Spurgeon and Ellie Moss House at 389 West Main Street is a representative example of a Dutch Colonial Revival residence with its gambrel roof, long shed dormers across the front and rear roof slopes and gabled entry porch supported by Tuscan columns.

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The McMurry-Bodie House at 419 West Main Street, also constructed in 1928, is the only Spanish Colonial Revival-style residence in Forest City. The two-story-on-basement dwelling reflects the Spanish Colonial influence in its stuccoed walls, flat roof with a scalloped and crenellated parapet and the arched openings of the entry porch, while the symmetrical façade and the sidelights and fanlight framing the front door are more traditional Colonial Revival elements.

The district also contains a few other examples of architectural revival styles popular during the first half of the twentieth century. The Lovelace-Ragin House, the district's sole Mediterranean Revival-style dwelling, occupies a large lot at 450 West Main Street. The eclectic 1928 residence features a stair tower with a conical roof, stained-glass windows and a corbelled cornice. First Presbyterian Church, constructed at 438 West Main Street in 1940, displays the influence of the Gothic Revival style. The exterior of the one-story, brick, front-gable-roofed sanctuary is austere, with projecting gabled entrance bays providing visual interest on the south and east elevations.

Cool Springs High School (NR 1999) at 382 West Main Street and Cool Springs Gymnasium at 121 Memorial Drive are classic examples of educational buildings constructed in the 1920s and 1950s, respectively. The former Cool Springs High School, 1924-1925, designed by Charlotte architect Louis Humbert Asbury, is an imposing two-story-on-basement, T-plan, flat-roofed edifice intended to evoke a sense of tradition and permanence. The school was executed in red brick laid in running bond with Classical Revival elements including a seven-part façade dominated by a monumental, two-story, flat-roofed portico supported by paired Tuscan columns. The 1958 Cool Springs Gymnasium, a one-story, orange brick, mid-century Modernist building designed by Chivous Gilmer Harrill, emphatically breaks with tradition and embraces the progressiveness of the postwar era. A concrete cornice and aluminum coping contribute to the building's streamlined, modern appearance.

Integrity Assessment

The West Main Street Historic District encompasses an intact, cohesive collection of domestic, religious, funerary, educational and recreational resources reflecting the development of Forest City from 1867 to 1958, with most of the contributing primary buildings dating from the 1920s and 1930s. Twenty-two primary and eleven secondary resources constitute the district, ninety percent of which are contributing. The noncontributing resources include modern outbuildings, a 1964 service station and a 1965 medical office. Although some of the historic properties have been altered with the installation of modern windows and synthetic siding and a small number of buildings post-dating the period of significance have been constructed, the relationships among the district's components have not been substantially altered since the period of significance. The West Main Street Historic District retains sufficient integrity of location,

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design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association to qualify for listing in the National Register.

INVENTORY

The inventory list is arranged alphabetically by street name. The north side of West Main Street is presented first. Each resource is designated as contributing or noncontributing to the historic significance and integrity of the district. The designation criteria were based on age, condition and degree of alteration. Buildings dating from the period of significance were considered contributing if they retained architectural integrity. Noncontributing buildings postdate 1958. Vacant lots are noted. Resources are listed by street address and each secondary resource within a property is assigned a letter. These designations are keyed to an overall map of the district.

Each historic property in the inventory is assigned a name, where possible, based on the first-known and/or a long-term occupant. Dates of construction are based on interviews with local residents, historic plats, Sanborn Map Company fire insurance maps, Rutherford County deeds, property cards and the style and form of the building.¹ City directories for Forest City are not available for the period of significance.

COOL SPRINGS DRIVE

Cool Springs Cemetery
121 Cool Springs Drive, 1867, Contributing Site

The Cool Springs Cemetery, roughly bounded by Memorial Drive to the west, a wooded area to the north, Wingo Street to the east and Cool Springs Drive and Cool Springs High School to the south, was established in 1867 as the burial ground for Cool Springs Baptist Church. Cool Springs Baptist Church, renamed Forest City Baptist Church in 1889 and First Baptist Church in 1922, constructed a new building on the south side of West Main Street closer to downtown in 1915. First Baptist Church deeded the cemetery on the north side of West Main Street to the town of Forest City in 1950, and the town continues to manage and maintain the 11.56-acre property. The cemetery contains eight sections, the oldest of which appears to be Section 4, surrounded by Rose, Hardin and Ridge Drives. Some markers are illegible, making it impossible to definitively determine the earliest grave, but a cursory survey revealed that one of the earliest marked graves in Section 4 appears to be that of Kate Simmons King, an infant who died on December 24, 1871. Many graves in Section 4 date to the late 1880s. A system of asphalt driveways wind through the burial ground and around clusters of evergreen and deciduous trees. The older sections of the

¹ Sanborn Map Company fire insurance maps dated May 1925 and April 1932 illustrate the portion of the district west of Wingo Street.

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cemetery contain a significant array of modest granite and marble gravemarkers and monuments, particularly obelisks, characteristic of Christian burial grounds dating to the Victorian era.

WEST MAIN STREET

North side of West Main Street, from east to west

Cool Springs High School (NR 1999)
382 West Main Street, 1924-1925, Contributing Building

The former Cool Springs High School, designed by Charlotte architect Louis Humbert Asbury, is an imposing two-story-on-basement, T-plan, flat-roofed building. The school was executed in red brick laid in running bond with Classical Revival elements including a seven-part façade dominated by a monumental, two-story, flat-roofed portico supported by paired Tuscan columns. The double-leaf, glass front door and fanlight are replacements, as are all of the windows. The large, symmetrically-arranged window openings have cast-stone sills, and a cast-stone water table, cornice and coping encircle the building. Recessed brick panels enliven the façade. The building functioned as Cool Springs High School from 1925 to 1998, and now serves as administrative offices for the Rutherford County school system.

Harrill Marker
Southwest corner of 382 West Main Street tax parcel, 1950, Contributing Object

Rough-face square granite marker with plaque that reads: "In memory of Robert McBrayer Harrill and Catherine Suttle Harrill, who gave this property to the Trustees of Burnt Chimney Academy for the erection of a public school on the 6th day of January in the year of our Lord 1875; Erected in 1950."

First Presbyterian Church
438 West Main Street, 1940, 1980s, Contributing Building

This one-story, Flemish bond brick, front-gable-roofed church displays the influence of the Gothic Revival style. Gabled entrance bays project from the south and east elevations. Steps lead to the east entrance, which encompasses a recessed double-leaf door with an arched stained-glass transom surmounted by an open bell tower. Stained-glass windows in a variety of shapes and sizes illuminate the sanctuary. A brick hyphen leads to a gabled office wing and a hip-roofed education building (both executed in running bond), added in the 1980s. A large hip-roofed porte cochere extends from the north end of the education building.

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This is the second church constructed by the First Presbyterian congregation, organized in 1895. Reverend O. G. Jones became the first full-time pastor for the church of twenty members in 1937. Jones purchased the lot on West Main Street in 1938 and W. H. Belk donated the bricks to construct the church. The first service was held in the building in 1940.

Lovelace-Ragin House
450 West Main Street, 1928, Contributing Building

Two-story, eclectic Mediterranean Revival-style, yellow brick dwelling with a tall hip roof, metal casement windows, hipped dormers and interior chimneys. A stair tower with a polygonal roof, stained-glass windows and a corbelled cornice projects from the façade. Arched, inset brick panels with decorative glazed headers surround the windows and doors on the southeast corner of the house, while brick quoins embellish the second-floor window openings. Wrought-iron balconies further ornament two second-floor windows on the façade. Brick steps with wrought-iron railings lead to a double-leaf entry flanked by wrought-iron lanterns. A patio extends along the east elevation to the side entrance, which is distinguished by brick quoins, a denticulated cornice and a parapet with a central, round brick medallion. One-story, hip-roofed wings extend from the rear (north) and side (west) elevations. The interior features a curving staircase in the tower, a black-and-white marble floor, Italian plaster walls and plaster moldings. An overgrown lily pond with a cast-stone border is in the rear yard.

Clarence and Ethel Young commissioned the house, but Mr. Young, president of the Farmers Bank in Forest City, died during construction. Mrs. Young later married Dr. T. B. Lovelace, a prominent local physician and family friend. The Youngs' daughter, also named Ethel, and her husband, William Crosswell Ragin Jr., inherited the house and resided there until their deaths in the early 1990s. Mr. Ragin, a chemist with Stonecutter Mills in Spindale and a devoted collector of early jazz recordings, added a room to the back porch to house his extensive record collection. First Presbyterian Church now owns the property.

a. Garage/Apartment
450 West Main Street, 1928, Contributing Building

Two-story, yellow brick, hip-roofed, detached garage with sliding wooden garage doors on the east elevation and a single-leaf entry sheltered by a shed-roofed hood on the south elevation. Four-over-four sash illuminate the second story apartment once occupied by the Young family's butler and cook.

South side of West Main Street, from east to west

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House

343 West Main Street, 1930, Contributing Building

One-and-one-half-story, brick bungalow with a side-gable concrete-shingle roof, a large central gabled dormer and a full-width gabled porch supported by brick posts spanned by a brick kneewall with diamond-shaped openings. The porch terminates in a porte cochere on the west elevation. The house retains original eight-over-one sash, exposed rafter ends, false beams, wood-shingled gables and an interior chimney.

Duplex

351-353 West Main Street, circa 1930, Contributing Building

One-story, frame duplex with a side-gable roof, a rear side-gabled wing, single-leaf entries sheltered by gabled hoods supported by oversized brackets, four-over-one sash, a brick foundation, an interior center chimney and wide German siding. According to long-time Forest City resident Virginia Rucker, Frank and Mae Wilkins owned this duplex and the one next door at 355-357 West Main Street.

Duplex

355-357 West Main Street, circa 1930, Contributing Building

One-story, brick, Craftsman-influenced duplex with a hipped roof, a rear gabled wing, two single-leaf entries sheltered by gabled entry porches supported by square brick posts, four-over-one sash and interior chimneys. According to long-time Forest City resident Virginia Rucker, Frank and Mae Wilkins owned this duplex and the one next door at 351-353 West Main Street.

Frank B. and Mae Bridges Wilkins House

363 West Main Street, circa 1910, Contributing Building

Two-story, three-bay, double-pile, frame Neoclassical Revival dwelling with a low hip roof, a monumental tetrastyle portico supported by Tuscan columns on plinths, a brick foundation and interior chimneys with corbelled stacks. Sidelights and a transom flank the entrance, which is surmounted by a cantilevered balcony with a low wood railing. The house retains original weatherboards, but the one-over-one sash and the pointed-arch portico lunette are replacements. Shed-roofed porches supported by square posts extend from the east and west elevations. A series of one-and-one-half and one-story hip and gable-roofed rear additions date to the first half of the twentieth century. Dr. Wilkins was a dentist; Mrs. Wilkins was a teacher.

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- a. Garage
363 West Main Street, circa 1920, Contributing Building

One-story, frame, shed-roofed garage with one open bay and weatherboards.

- b. Garage
363 West Main Street, 1950, Contributing Building

One-story, concrete-block, shed-roofed garage with one open bay.

Clarence Arthur and Mary Bowles McDaniel House II
373 West Main Street, circa 1925, Contributing Building

One-story, frame bungalow with a front-gable roof, a full-width inset porch supported by battered posts on brick piers spanned by a concrete-capped brick kneewall, replacement one-over-one sash, exposed rafter ends, triangular eave brackets, a brick foundation and German siding with wood shingles in the gable ends. Louvered vents flank the one-over-one sash window in the front gable. A brick end chimney pierces the intersecting gabled roof on the east elevation. Mrs. McDaniel was the town librarian for many years. Clarence Arthur McDaniel Jr. inherited the house after his mother's death in 1969.

- a. Garage
373 West Main Street, circa 1925, Contributing Building

One-story, frame, hip-roofed garage with an enclosed shed room, an open garage bay and German siding.

Clarence Arthur and Mary Bowles McDaniel House
381 West Main Street, 1913, Contributing Building

Two-story, frame, transitional Queen Anne/Colonial Revival house with a gable-on-hip roof, a wraparound porch supported by paneled square posts, deep eaves, cornice returns, diamond-shaped windows in the gables, a rusticated concrete block foundation and an interior chimney. A transom surmounts the louvered screen door at the front entrance. The house retains original weatherboards, but the one-over-one windows are replacements. A series of one-and-one-half and one-story gable and shed-roofed rear and side additions date to the first half of the twentieth century. Clarence Arthur and Mary Bowles McDaniel conveyed part of this property to Dana McDaniel in 1934 and the rest to Dana McDaniel Robinson in 1949.

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- a. Garage
381 West Main Street, circa 1940, Contributing Building

One-story, frame, front-gable-roofed garage with a concrete block foundation and German siding.

Spurgeon and Ellie Moss House
389 West Main Street, circa 1925, Contributing Building

Two-story, frame, Dutch Colonial Revival house with a gambrel roof, full-width shed dormers across the front and rear roof slopes, a gabled entry porch supported by Tuscan columns, six-over-one and eight-over-one sash, a brick foundation, end and interior chimneys, vinyl German siding and a flat-roofed sun porch on the east elevation. Mr. Moss sold mules and used cars. He served as Rutherford County tax collector from 1936 until 1942.

- a. Garage
389 West Main Street, circa 1925, Contributing Building

One-story, frame, front-gable-roofed garage with a double-leaf door, a brick foundation and wide German siding.

Biggerstaff-Griffin House
399 West Main Street, 1925, Contributing Building

Two-story, brick, Colonial Revival house with a side-gable roof, a projecting central pedimented bay, a symmetrical façade, a single-leaf entry framed by sidelights and a transom, eight-over-one sash, lunettes in the front and west gables, a modillion cornice and end chimneys. A one-and-one-half-story wing and a hip-roofed, enclosed porch extend from the east elevation, and a one-story wing from the rear. The house is being restored, and the current owner has removed the original gabled entry porch and porte cochere.

Robert E. and Eula B. Biggerstaff purchased this lot from Clarence Arthur and Mary Bowles McDaniel on January 19, 1925 and constructed the house soon after. At the time the 1930 census was taken, the Biggerstaffs rented rooms to six teachers. Mr. Biggerstaff was the manager of Farmers Bank and Trust, which became the Union Trust Company Bank in the early 1930s. He died in 1936, and his wife Eula Blanton Biggerstaff sold the house to J. W. and Alice Grace Griffin in 1944. The Griffins moved to Forest City from Lumberton and owned a series of movie theaters including the 1948 Art Deco Griffin Theater on West Main Street, designed by J. W. Griffin Jr. J. W. Griffin Sr. conveyed the house to his sons, J. W. Griffin Jr. and Thomas R. Griffin in 1957. J. W. Griffin Jr. owned the house until his death in 2001.

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a. Outbuilding

399 West Main Street, circa 1930, Contributing Building

One-story, frame, shed-roofed outbuilding with a board-and-batten door, a brick foundation and wide German siding.

b. Garage

399 West Main Street, circa 1930, Contributing Building

One-story, brick, hip-roofed, two-bay garage with roll-up wooden doors.

Charles S. and Mary Hemphill House

407 West Main Street, 1927, Contributing Building

Two-story-on-basement, brick, Craftsman/Colonial Revival house with a low hip roof, a symmetrical façade, a gabled entry porch supported by Tuscan columns, a single-leaf entry framed by sidelights and a transom, Craftsman eight-over-one sash, hipped dormers and flat-roofed sun porches on the east and west elevations. A flat-roofed carport extends from the rear elevation. Mr. Hemphill managed a dry cleaning business and was a member of the Town of Forest City board of aldermen in the 1930s. According to Phillip Keith Price, who purchased the house in 2000, the Hemphills rented rooms to teachers and had the first neon sign he remembers in Forest City outside the house advertising that rooms were available for tourists to rent.

a. Outbuilding

407 West Main Street, 1928, Contributing Building

One-story, frame, hip-roofed outbuilding with large plate glass windows, a double-leaf glass door with a fanlight, a brick foundation and a metal roof.

McMurry-Bodie House

419 West Main Street, 1928, Contributing Building

Two-story, stuccoed, Spanish Colonial Revival house with a flat roof, tile coping, a scalloped and crenellated parapet, a symmetrical façade, a central flat-roofed entry porch, a single-leaf entry framed by sidelights and a fanlight and replacement six-over-six and six-over-nine sash. A flat-roofed one-story wing projects from the west elevation and an enclosed porch from the east elevation. A flat-roofed frame

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addition extends from the rear elevation. An exterior wooden stair provides access to the rear entrances and a second-story deck. John McMurry was a night watchman. At the time the 1930 census was taken, the McMurry family rented rooms to six teachers. John N. and Ora McMurray sold the house to M. P. and Theora S. Bodie in 1931.

Crown Service Station
431 West Main Street, 1964, Noncontributing Building

One-story, brick, Modernist service station with a side-gable roof, three garage bays, a corner office with a flared and curving glazed wall, angled end walls and a V-roof canopy. It appears that the roof was originally flat.

Amos C. and May B. Duncan House
455 West Main Street, 1928, Contributing Building

Two-story, brick, Colonial Revival house with a side-gable roof, a symmetrical five-bay façade, a single-leaf entry framed by sidelights and a fanlight, two sets of French doors on each side of the central entrance bay, eight-over-eight sash and end chimneys. Two paneled pilasters are all that remain of the one-story portico. Flat-roofed one-story wings extend from the east and west elevations; a gabled wing projects from the rear.

Dr. Duncan, a physician, was the first vice-president of the Rutherford County Club, a county-wide service organization, in 1922, and served on the board in 1930. He was a member of the Town of Forest City board of aldermen in the late 1930s. Mrs. Duncan continued to be active in community affairs after her husband's death in 1940. She was the executive secretary for the Citizens Service Corps of Rutherford County from 1942 until 1944 and served as a chapter officer for the United War Fund in 1944.

Forest City Chiropractic
467 West Main Street, 1965, Noncontributing Building

One-story, brick, hip-roofed office building with a recessed, pedimented entry and six-over-six sash. Two single-leaf glass doors provide access to the rear of the building. Paul H. Cartwright constructed this medical office and has been practicing there since 1965.

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B. B. and Jimmie Doggett House
475 West Main Street, 1925, Contributing Building

Two-and-one-half-story, brick, eclectic Period Revival house with a side-gable roof and projecting gabled bays on the front and rear elevations, a flat-roofed entry porch supported by grouped square posts, a single-leaf glass door with sidelights and a transom, gable and shed-roofed wall dormers, six-over-six sash and end chimneys. A flat-roofed, one-story sunporch extends from the west elevation; a small open porch and a porte cochere from the east. Metal roof balustrades top the entry porch, sunporch and porte cochere.

B. B. Doggett was a county road commissioner in the 1910s. He served on the board of directors of Chimney Rock Mountains, Inc., a corporation chartered to develop a summer resort at Lake Lure; the board of directors of the Rutherford County Club, a county-wide service organization; and was a member of the Town of Forest City board of aldermen in the 1920s. Doggett was a true entrepreneur: a banker, car dealer and oil salesman. The Doggett House is now owned by Rutherford County and operates as Magnolia House, a vocationally-oriented outpatient adult mental health care facility. The county constructed a flat-roofed, one-story rear addition with handicapped access.

- a. Shed
475 West Main Street, circa 1990, Noncontributing Building

One-story, metal storage shed with a front-gable roof and a double-leaf entry.

- b. Shed
475 West Main Street, circa 1990, Noncontributing Building

One-story, frame storage shed with a side-gable roof, a double-leaf entry, one-over-one sash and vinyl siding.

Lovelace House
487 West Main Street, 1954, Contributing Building

One-story, brick Ranch house with a side-gable roof and a projecting gabled entrance bay with a Colonial Revival broken pediment entrance surround. Glass blocks are inset into the east side of the façade under the one-over-one sash windows; a large multi-pane window occupies most of the west side. A brick end chimney stands on the west elevation. A gabled wing with a sunroom and attached carport extends from the east elevation. According to Amelia Wilkie, Reverend Lovelace and his wife were the first owners of this house.

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Harrill-Wilkins House
499 West Main Street, 1925, Contributing Building

One-and-one-half-story, brick bungalow with a side-gable roof and large central gabled dormers on the front and rear elevations. The full-width shed-roofed porch is supported by brick posts spanned by a wood balustrade. A side-gabled porte cochere extends from the west elevation and shelters a side entrance; a side-gabled sunporch is on the east elevation. The house retains some original eight-over-one sash (most of the windows have been replaced), exposed rafter ends, eave brackets, German siding in the gables and an interior chimney. A partial-width shed-roofed screened porch was added to the rear elevation. According to Keith Price, the Harrills constructed this house. Amelia Wilkins purchased the property from later owners, the Hicks, who then moved across the street. Amelia's granddaughter, Amelia Wilkie, moved into the house with her mother and sister around 1945 after her father's death. The Wilkies continued to live in the West Main Street house after Mrs. Wilkins passed away.

MEMORIAL DRIVE

Cool Springs Gymnasium
121 Memorial Drive, 1958, Contributing Building

This one-story, orange brick, mid-century Modernist building, designed by Chivous Gilmer Harrill, has three distinct parts: a gymnasium with a bowstring truss roof and original hardwood floor, a flat-roofed front lobby with a ticket booth and restrooms and a flat-roofed rear wing containing locker rooms. A concrete cornice and aluminum coping contribute to the building's streamlined, modern appearance. Skylights illuminate the gymnasium, while casement windows line the east and west elevations of the locker rooms. Recessed entrances on the north, south and east elevations provide access to the building, which now serves as a public recreation center operated by the Town of Forest City.

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8. Summary Statement of Significance

The locally-significant West Main Street Historic District in Forest City, Rutherford County, meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion C for Architecture and Art. The largely linear district includes approximately twenty-seven acres two blocks west of what was once one of the region's most important industrial centers. The period of significance begins in 1867, the year that Cool Springs Cemetery was established as the burial ground for Cool Springs Baptist Church, and extends to 1958, the year Cool Springs Gymnasium was constructed. Cool Springs Cemetery meets Criterion C and Criterion Consideration D as it encompasses a significant array of modest granite and marble gravemarkers and monuments, particularly obelisks, characteristic of Christian burial grounds dating to the Victorian era.

The West Main Street neighborhood developed into a prosperous enclave containing the residences of prominent Forest City businessmen and professionals. Property owners constructed six of the buildings in the district soon after W. A. Harrill and J. A. Watkins subdivided their land on the south side of West Main Street in 1924. Architectural styles range from modest one-story bungalows to two-story Neoclassical, Colonial and Mediterranean Revival houses. In addition to dwellings, the district includes the 1925 Cool Springs High School (NR 1999), an impressive two-story-on-basement, T-plan, flat-roofed brick building with a monumental, two-story, flat-roofed Classical Revival portico supported by paired Tuscan columns, and the 1940 First Presbyterian Church, which displays the influence of the Gothic Revival style. The Modernist Cool Springs Gymnasium reflects the statewide trend toward separate, hygienic, well-lit athletic facilities for North Carolina students during the 1950s. Even though Cool Springs Gymnasium is less than fifty years old, it is an integral part of the Cool Springs High School complex and contributes to the cohesiveness of the West Main Street Historic District. Comparable Modernist gyms in North Carolina have been successfully listed in the National Register.

The West Main Street Historic District encompasses an intact collection of domestic, religious, funerary, educational and recreational resources reflecting the development of Forest City from 1867 to 1958, with most of the contributing primary buildings dating from the 1920s and 1930s. Twenty-two primary and eleven secondary resources constitute the district, ninety percent of which are contributing. The noncontributing resources include modern outbuildings, a 1964 service station and a 1965 medical office.

Historical Background

Rutherford County, located in southwestern North Carolina, was formed from Tryon County in 1779 and named for Griffith Rutherford, an Indian fighter, member of the Provincial Congress and Revolutionary War general. Rutherfordton, incorporated in 1793, is the county seat. The county's population, isolated by poor roads, consisted primarily of subsistence farmers until the introduction of the textile industry in the

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late nineteenth century. The powerful Broad and Second Broad Rivers in the southeastern section of the county provided the incentive for local investors to build waterpowered textile mills, and the arrival of the railroad in 1887 created an outlet for cash crops and accelerated industrial development.²

The town of Forest City was incorporated in 1877 as Burnt Chimney. The small crossroads community was so named after a circa 1855 fire that destroyed the home of James McArthur, leaving only a blackened chimney. The Burnt Chimney Post Office (no longer extant) had served the community at the intersection of the Shelby-Rutherfordton Road (now Main Street) and a major north-south road (now Cherry Mountain Road and Depot Street) since 1869. John Bostic built the first dwelling on Main Street (no longer extant) between 1825 and 1830, and other early residents included Dr. G. E. Young, Dr. T. E. Lovelace, Reverend J. E. Yarborough, A. H. McDaniel, John Blanton, John B. Harrill, Alfred Harrill, Thomas Wilkins, Amos McBrayer, Matt McBrayer and Wallace Jackson. A few frame commercial buildings were constructed at the center of town, followed by the Burnt Chimney Academy in 1874. The population grew to 110 in 1880, the first year the federal census documented statistics for the town independently of the county. By 1882 there was a movement to rename Burnt Chimney in honor of Forest Davis, a local lumber merchant, and the post office became Forest City, although it was not until 1887 that the community was officially renamed. The first Forest City newspaper was established in 1885, but its offices were destroyed in an 1886 fire along with most of the businesses in town.³ The commercial district was reconstructed in brick, and many of those late 1880s buildings are contributing resources in the Main Street Historic District (NR 2002).

Although plans for railroad lines through Rutherford County were in place before the Civil War, it was not until 1887 that the Wilmington, Charlotte and Rutherford (Seaboard Airline) Railroad reached Forest City and Rutherfordton. The Southern Railway, which ran from Charleston to Cincinnati and Chicago, soon followed, arriving in Rutherfordton by way of Forest City in 1890. The Cliffside Railroad connected Cliffside Mills on the Second Broad River in the southeastern corner of the county to the Seaboard Railroad by 1907. The Clinchfield, Carolina and Ohio Railroad was completed through the county in 1909, at which time twelve passenger trains stopped in Forest City daily.⁴

² Kimberly I. Merkel, *The Historic Architecture of Rutherford County* (Forest City: Rutherford County Arts Council, 1983), 3, 4.

³ Clarence W. Griffin, *Essays on North Carolina History* (Forest City: The Forest City Courier, 1951), 145-149, 164.

⁴ Merkel, *The Historic Architecture of Rutherford County*, 20; William B. Bynum, ed., *The Heritage of Rutherford County, Volume I* (Forest City: Genealogical Society of Old Tryon County, Inc., 1984), 27.

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Raleigh Rutherford Haynes and Simpson B. Tanner are credited with bringing the modern textile industry to Rutherford County about the same time the first railroad lines arrived.⁵ R. R. Haynes began to acquire land in the High Shoals area of the Second Broad River as potential locations for textile mills in 1885. His partners included Simpson B. Tanner, J. S. Spencer and J. M. Scott. Work on the first mill, named Henrietta after Simpson Tanner's mother-in-law, Mrs. Henrietta Spencer, commenced in 1887. When the Henrietta Mill was completed in 1893 it was the largest textile plant in North Carolina. The mill started out with 10,000 spindles and soon increased to 28,000. The second Henrietta Mill, with 48,000 spindles, was constructed in the nearby community of Caroleen in 1896.⁶

Haynes and his partners financed the construction of the Florence Mill in Forest City in 1897, but Haynes sold his interest in the mill soon after completion of the new building to concentrate on other endeavors. Florence Mill (Main Street Historic District Boundary Expansion, NR 2004) continued to be an extremely significant force in the growth and development of Forest City, as evidenced by the fact that Forest City tripled in population after the mill and railroads came—growing from a small community of 419 residents in 1890 to a booming town of 1,592 residents in 1910. Haynes began purchasing property along the nearby Second Broad River for a new mill, Cliffside, or Haynes Plant No. 1, in 1899. The mill, completed in 1902, was one of the last waterpowered mills in Rutherford County and the largest gingham mill in the southern states at the time of its construction.⁷

As the twentieth century dawned, Forest City, like much of the state, was poised for growth and expansion. Most residents worked at Florence Mill, Dixie Knitting Mills, Regal Manufacturing (lumber) or in auxiliary service enterprises. The rapid surge in Forest City's population in the first two decades of the twentieth century fueled a residential and commercial building boom and a great diversification of goods and services. Amenities such as telephone service were available to Forest City residents by 1901, followed by public water and electrical systems in 1910. Dr. T. C. McBrayer constructed a tuberculosis clinic on Main Street in 1902 and the Mabree Hotel in 1904, hoping to capitalize on the moderate climate, but Forest City never became a health retreat or a resort community. The First National Bank of Forest City was established in June of 1904 with Dr. G. E. Young as president.⁸

⁵ Merkel, *The Historic Architecture of Rutherford County*, 20-21. Earlier attempts at establishing cotton mills in Rutherford County were short-lived, failing due to a lack of capital and equipment.

⁶ Ibid., 595; W.E. Christian, "Life Story of Late Raleigh Rutherford Haynes," *The Charlotte Observer*, March 11, 1917; Ina Fortune Haynes, *Raleigh Rutherford Haynes: A History of His Life and Achievements* (Cliffside: n.p., 1954), 11.

⁷ Griffin, *The History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties*, 596-597.

⁸ Griffin, *Essays on North Carolina History*, 151-154, 165.

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The Forest City Betterment Club, which later became the Forest City Woman's Club, was organized in 1914 and responsible for city beautification efforts, including the creation of a central town square and wide city streets with landscaped medians. Implementation of these initiatives resulted in the 1927 selection of Forest City as one of the ten most beautiful and best planned cities in the United States by the Department of Agriculture. The construction of a new courthouse in 1926 and a town hall and fire department in 1928 further improved the appearance of downtown Forest City. The first public library, established in 1929, was housed in the town hall.⁹

Forest City began to expand to the east and west in the 1910s. Developers including J. V. Ware, E. O. and J. H. Thomas, C. M. Teal, J. B. Harrill, J. A. Wilkie, Horace Doggett, W. A. Harrill, J. A. Watkins and Dr. T. C. McBrayer subdivided their property in close proximity to downtown from 1914 to 1927, targeting the middle and lower middle class with modest houses on relatively small, inexpensive lots. A few of Forest City's business leaders, including B. B. Doggett, who owned a car dealership, commissioned more elaborate residences on large lots facing West Main Street.

Forest City, like most of the nation, saw little development during World War I, but the population grew from 2,312 in 1920 to 4,068 in 1930, once again creating the need for additional housing. Two residences in the West Main Street Historic District were erected before development efforts escalated west of downtown, but the majority of the dwellings in the district were built following municipal improvement efforts such as the paving of Main Street and the construction of Cool Springs High School in 1924. W. A. Harrill and J. A. Watkins subdivided property they owned on the south side of West Main Street that year, creating 56 lots that were 25 feet wide and 110 to 150 feet deep. Most buyers purchased more than one lot and developed their property slowly: six houses were constructed in the 1920s, four in the 1930s and one in 1954. Much of the land on the east side of the Harrill-Watkins property belonged to Dr. T. C. McBrayer, who sold off building lots incrementally through the 1930s. The land on the north side of West Main Street west of Cool Springs Cemetery and Cool Springs High School was also subdivided for residential use, but only one dwelling, the Lovelace-Ragin House, was erected in 1928.

Although building costs remained high in the early 1920s, the *Forest City Courier* reported that "new houses are going up almost daily and even with this hustling movement there is still a crying demand for new houses." A May 14, 1925 article entitled "Forest City Growing Like a Green Bay Tree" discussed improvements on East Main Street, particularly the paving of the road, "grading and beautifying of yards." A February 1926 article stated that \$300,000 worth of building permits were issued in Forest City the

⁹ Ibid., 162-163.

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previous year. This rapid development may have prompted the creation of a zoning commission, appointed by the city council in early 1926.¹⁰

The Great Depression slowed the economic growth of Forest City, like the rest of the country. The economy started to recover by the late 1930s, when the Wright-Bachman Lumber Company built a plant just outside of Forest City. The Rutherford Electric Membership Corporation, headquartered in Forest City, was established in 1937 with 120 miles of lines throughout the county. The First Presbyterian congregation purchased a lot for a new church on the corner of Vance and West Main Street in 1938. In 1939, the Works Progress Administration granted Forest City \$135,000 for street, sidewalk and gutter improvements and \$13,409 for a sewage treatment plant. U.S. 74 was widened from eighteen to thirty feet between Forest City and Rutherfordton in 1939 and 1940. Forest City continued to grow, with a population of 5,036 in 1940.¹¹

Increased production associated with World War II resulted in some resurgence for the southern textile industry, but did not provide the impetus to save many small companies.¹² During World War II, seventy-five percent of the total production of the Florence Mill was directed at the war effort. The mill manufactured bag sheeting and flannels for veteran's hospitals, the Red Cross and other government contracts. Company employees participated in a payroll deduction plan to contribute to the purchase of war bonds. The only time Florence Mill ever shut down in the middle of a shift was the day World War II ended.¹³ Other Rutherford County textile mills manufactured a variety of goods for the war effort, and Rutherford County farmers responded to the national call for escalated production of agricultural commodities including soy beans and sweet potatoes. The Wright-Bachman Lumber Company produced bomb boxes, which enclosed jelly incendiary bombs, during the war years.¹⁴

Forest City experienced a period of expansion from the mid-1940s through the early 1950s, when the GI Bill helped returning World War II veterans pay for homes. National housing shortages resulting from years of slow development during the Depression and war years, coupled with the post-war population

¹⁰ "Forest City Growing Like a Green Bay Tree," *Forest City Courier*, May 14, 1925; "Forest City: A Few Things Every Citizen Should Know About the Town He Lives In," *Forest City Courier*, February 18 and February 25, 1926.

¹¹ Clarence R. Griffin, *History of Rutherford County, 1937-1951* (Asheville: The Inland Press, 1952), 3, 13, 16, 29-30

¹² Hall et. al, *Like a Family*, 202-208; William B. Bynum, ed., *The Heritage of Rutherford County, Volume I*, xxv.

¹³ Griffin, *History of Rutherford County, 1937-1951*, 29, 77, 86; Former Employees of Cone Mills Florence Plant, Interview by the author, 1 March 2004, Forest City.

¹⁴ Griffin, *History of Rutherford County, 1937-1951*, 29-30.

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influx, fueled the construction of new houses on vacant lots in existing neighborhoods. Development west of downtown continued through the 1960s, and as West Main Street (U.S. 74 Business) became a busy commercial thoroughfare, a service station and a medical office building were constructed on vacant lots in the district.

In the decades since, the character of the West Main Street Historic District has remained remarkably stable, maintaining a mix of homeowners and renters, young professionals and retirees. The relatively few buildings that post-date the period of significance are of compatible form and scale, and the neighborhood still retains its early-to mid-twentieth century character.

Architecture Context

The church, dwellings, outbuildings and school in the West Main Street Historic District represent the architectural styles and forms that were common in Forest City and throughout North Carolina from the early twentieth century through the post-World War II era. During this period, architecture reflected the social and economic changes occurring as Forest City transformed from a quiet crossroads community to the largest town in Rutherford County. As the population of Forest City grew, landowners near downtown took advantage of the opportunity to profit from the subdivision of their large parcels of land into smaller residential lots. This push outward from the center of town translated into the construction of houses on streets only one or two blocks beyond main arteries and commercial areas. During the first decades of the twentieth century, it was common for bank presidents and prosperous merchants to live only one street away from store clerks and carpenters. While professionals and workers continued to live in relative close proximity to their work places and each other, the differences in the two groups' income and social standing were made clear by the size of their houses and the lots they occupied.

This disparity is very apparent in Forest City. The lots on the east end of the district are smaller and contain more modest dwellings, a few of which were constructed as rental duplexes. This section also encompasses the district's oldest resources. For example, the imposing Neoclassical Revival home of Frank and Mae Bridges Wilkins at 363 West Main Street is adjacent to the modest circa 1925 bungalow constructed by Clarence and Mary McDaniel at 381 Main Street. A series of Colonial Revival and eclectic Period Revival homes occupy more expansive lots at the west end of the district.

The earliest resource in the West Main Street Historic District is Cool Springs Cemetery, established in 1867 as the burial ground for Cool Springs Baptist Church. The cemetery contains eight sections, the oldest of which appears to be Section 4, surrounded by Rose, Hardin and Ridge Drives. A system of asphalt driveways winds through a significant array of modest granite and marble gravemarkers and monuments, particularly obelisks, characteristic of Christian burial grounds dating to the Victorian era.

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The monuments found in such cemeteries reflect the influence of the nineteenth century romantic movement, which extolled nature and sentiment, as well as the mechanization of the industrial age. Monument makers inspired by a broad range of pattern books created a great variety of markers with figural images and geometric forms. The obelisk—a tapering shaft on a pedestal—was an extremely popular marker type due to its “association with Egyptian sepulchral monuments signifying eternal life beyond the earthly realm,” thus embodying the “Christian belief in the eternity of the spirit.”¹⁵

The earliest houses in the West Main Street Historic District date to the 1910s. The circa 1910 Frank B. and Mae Bridges Wilkins House at 363 West Main Street is one of the most imposing residences in Forest City. A monumental tetrastyle portico supported by Tuscan columns on plinths projects from the façade of the two-story, frame, hip-roofed Neoclassical Revival dwelling. Sidelights and a transom flank the entrance, which is surmounted by a balcony with a low wood railing. The McDaniel House, constructed at 381 West Main Street in 1913, is a two-story, frame, transitional Queen Anne/Colonial Revival house with a gable-on-hip roof and a wraparound porch supported by paneled square posts. Both houses use scale and massing rather than an abundance of architectural ornament to convey the wealth and social status of the original owners.

As the twentieth century progressed, national trends in architecture began to exert a greater influence on houses in the district. The bungalow enjoyed national popularity in the late 1910s and 1920s and architects designed fine examples for clients from coast to coast. Scaled-down versions of the style proved immensely popular throughout North Carolina into the early 1930s. Building plans for these houses, with their wide overhanging eaves, open arrangement of rooms and inviting porches, appeared in national magazines and catalogs. The bungalow was inexpensive and easy to construct and appealed to families’ desires for a modern house.

Several bungalows stand on the south side of West Main Street, and even some of the plainest dwellings, like the circa 1930 duplex at 355-357 West Main, manifest Craftsman elements such as square brick porch posts, four-over-one window sash and exposed rafter ends. The one-and-one-half-story, brick bungalows at 343 West Main Street and 499 West Main Street are almost identical, with side-gable roofs, large central gabled dormers, full-width front porches and gabled porte cocheres. The Clarence Arthur and Mary Bowles McDaniel House, constructed at 373 West Main Street in 1930, is an intact one-and-one-half-story frame bungalow with a front-gable roof, a full-width recessed porch supported by tapered posts on brick piers, exposed rafter ends, triangular eave brackets and German siding with wood shingles in the gable ends.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Walton Potter and Beth M. Boland, *National Register Bulletin 41: Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1992), 12.

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The influence of the Colonial Revival style is evident in the West Main Street neighborhood from the 1920s through the 1950s. Most Colonial Revival houses from the period are modest dwellings with symmetrical facades and classical or Georgian nuances, often executed in brick veneer. The 1925, two-story-on-basement, brick Biggerstaff-Griffin House at 399 West Main Street features Colonial Revival elements such as a projecting central pedimented bay, a single-leaf entry framed by sidelights and a transom, lunettes in the front and west gables, a modillion cornice and end chimneys. The Amos C. and May B. Duncan House, constructed at 455 West Main Street in 1928 is a two-story-on-basement, brick, Colonial Revival house with a side-gable roof, a symmetrical five-bay façade, a single-leaf entry framed by sidelights and a fanlight, two sets of French doors on each side of the central entrance bay and end chimneys.

Other variations of the Colonial Revival style—including the Dutch and Spanish Colonial Revival—are also present. The 1928 Spurgeon and Ellie Moss House at 389 West Main Street is a representative example of a Dutch Colonial Revival residence with its gambrel roof, long shed dormers across the front and rear roof slopes and gabled entry porch supported by Tuscan columns. The McMurry-Bodie House at 419 West Main Street, also constructed in 1928, is the only Spanish Colonial Revival-style residence in Forest City. The two-story dwelling reflects the Spanish Colonial influence in its stuccoed walls, flat roof with a scalloped and crenellated parapet and the arched openings of the entry porch, while the symmetrical façade and the sidelights and fanlight framing the front door are more traditional Colonial Revival elements.

As in many neighborhoods that developed during the first half of the twentieth century, the West Main Street Historic District also includes an example of a period revival dwelling based on the English cottage form. Drawn from buildings erected in Tudor England during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, such houses are usually executed in brick with false timbering in steeply pitched gables and feature diamond-paned or casement windows, round-arched doors and façade chimneys. The 1925 B. B. and Jimmie Doggett House at 475 West Main Street is an austere interpretation of the style in form only, without traditional Tudor embellishments. The two-and-one-half-story, brick, eclectic Period Revival house features projecting gabled bays on the front and rear elevations characteristic of the style, while the flat-roofed entry porch supported by grouped square posts, entrance with sidelights and transom, gable and shed-roofed wall dormers, six-over-six sash and end chimneys are more Colonial Revival in nature.

The Lovelace-Ragin House, the district's sole Mediterranean Revival-style residence, occupies a large lot at 450 West Main Street. Mediterranean Revival houses evoke villas on the Mediterranean coasts of France, Spain and Italy with their low-pitched hipped roofs covered with ceramic tiles, deep bracketed eaves, and arches above large windows, French doors and symmetrical facades. The Lovelace-Ragin House, like the Doggett House, is also an eclectic interpretation of a style rather than a meticulous

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translation. The Clarence and Ethel Young constructed the two-and-one-half-story, yellow brick, hip-roofed dwelling in 1928. A stair tower with a polygonal roof, stained-glass windows and a corbelled cornice projects from the façade. Arched, inset brick panels with decorative glazed headers surround the windows and doors on the southeast corner of the house, while brick quoins embellish the second-floor window openings. Wrought-iron balconies further ornament two second-floor windows on the façade.

When World War II war ended, Forest City's population rose to 4,971 in 1950 as soldiers returned home.¹⁶ As construction revived after the war, some North Carolina families sought the comfort and reassurance of building in styles of the past such as the Colonial Revival, but, more commonly, new houses took on a decidedly modern appearance. The Ranch house, with its low pitched roof and open floor plan, originated in California in the 1930s and by the middle of the century had been adapted throughout the country to meet the needs of families who desired a low-cost dwelling with living area on one level and enough space for all its members to enjoy their privacy. The pervasiveness of the Colonial Revival style through the post-World War II era is manifested in the modest, one-story, brick, side-gable-roofed Ranch house at 487 West Main Street, where the front entry is embellished with a broken pediment surround.

Like the Doggett House and the Lovelace-Ragin House, First Presbyterian Church, constructed at 438 West Main Street in 1940, is a vernacular interpretation of a popular early-twentieth-century architectural revival style. The exterior of the one-story, Flemish bond brick, front-gable-roofed Gothic Revival sanctuary is austere, with projecting gabled entrance bays providing visual interest on the south and east elevations. Steps lead to the east entrance, which encompasses a recessed double-leaf door with an arched stained-glass transom surmounted by an open bell tower. Stained-glass windows in a variety of shapes and sizes illuminate the interior.

Cool Springs High School at 382 West Main Street and Cool Springs Gymnasium at 400 West Main Street are classic examples of educational buildings constructed in the 1920s and 1950s, respectively. The former Cool Springs High School, 1924-1925, designed by Charlotte architect Louis Humbert Asbury, is an imposing two-story-on-basement, T-plan, flat-roofed edifice intended to evoke a sense of tradition and permanence. The school was executed in red brick laid in running bond with Classical Revival elements including a seven-part façade dominated by a monumental, two-story, flat-roofed portico supported by paired Tuscan columns. The 1958 Cool Springs Gymnasium, a one-story, orange brick, mid-century Modernist building designed by Chivous Gilmer Harrill, emphatically breaks with tradition and embraces the progressiveness of the postwar era. The building, which reflects the statewide trend toward separate,

¹⁶ *Seventeenth Census of the United States, 1950, Volume II: Characteristics of the Population, Part 33: North Carolina* (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1952), 33-13.

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modern, hygienic, well-lit athletic facilities for North Carolina students during the 1950s, has three distinct parts: a gymnasium with a bowstring truss roof and original hardwood floor, a flat-roofed front lobby with a ticket booth and restrooms and a flat-roofed rear wing containing locker rooms. A concrete cornice and aluminum coping contribute to the building's streamlined, modern appearance. Each building embodies the design aesthetic of the period in which it was constructed.

The Cool Springs Gymnasium is similar to other Modernist North Carolina gymnasiums recently listed in the National Register as part of school and historic district nominations. The 1954 Block Smith Memorial Gymnasium at 130 East Rhodes Street in Lincolnton is within the South Aspen Street Historic District (NR 2003). The broad segmental-vaulted roof and concrete-bordered, projecting lobby are character-defining features of the Modernist brick building. Tile walls with a gray field and red zig-zagging lines distinguish the interior.¹⁷ The Cleveland School (NR 2005) complex in rural Johnston County in the vicinity of Clayton includes a more conservative flat-roofed, rectangular, red brick, 1955 gymnasium with grouped ten-light windows on the side elevations. The interior retains wood floors and office space at the front and rear.¹⁸ The James Benson Dudley Senior High School Gymnasium (NR 2002), built in 1959 east of Greensboro in Nocho Park, a historically African American suburb, is an important component of the Dudley High School campus and an interesting departure from the typical utilitarian physical education facilities constructed during the 1950s. Designed by African American architect Edward Jenkins during his tenure with Loewenstein-Atkinson Architects, the steel-framed, groin-vaulted building incorporates corrugated glass fiber-reinforced polyester panels into the brick exterior walls. Jenkins also used arch columns set on concrete bearing plates to support the two massive intersecting steel arches of the principal roofline.¹⁹

The domestic architecture of Rutherfordton is more similar to Forest City than any other town in Rutherford County. Like Forest City, some of the most impressive dwellings in Rutherfordton lines Main Street. Although not yet included in a National Register historic district, a prime concentration of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century residences executed in the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Italianate, Tudor Revival and Craftsman styles extends from North Main to North Washington Street, along with a few early-nineteenth-century dwellings. Rutherfordton remained the county seat even after Forest City eclipsed it in population and industry, and the picturesque commercial district and government buildings

¹⁷ Laura A. W. Phillips, "South Aspen Street Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2003.

¹⁸ Susannah V. Franklin, "Cleveland School," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2005.

¹⁹ Jennifer F. Martin, "James Benson Dudley Senior High School and Gymnasium," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2002.

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(Main Street Historic District, NR 1995; Rutherford County Courthouse, NR 1979) date to a period of rebuilding during the first decades of the twentieth century.²⁰

Other districts in the region, such as the Central School Historic District (NR 2001) in Kings Mountain, Cleveland County, contain examples of many of the same architectural styles found in the West Main Street Historic District. The houses, school, churches, commercial building and depot in the Central School Historic District were constructed from 1870 to 1950 and reflect the growth and development of the Kings Mountain that began with the arrival of the Charlotte-Atlanta Railway and was driven by the textile industry in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The residential section of town surrounds a central business district. The earliest vernacular frame dwellings are embellished with decorative Victorian elements. The influence of national architectural styles is evident in the later Second Empire, Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Neoclassical Revival, Tudor Revival and Gothic Revival buildings in the district.²¹

The West Main Street Historic District is an intact, cohesive collection of domestic, religious, funerary, educational and recreational resources that clearly reflects the growth and expansion of Forest City from 1867 to 1958. Neighborhoods on the east side of downtown developed at about the same time, but, for the most part, contain more modest dwellings. The majority of the buildings in the East Main Street Historic District (NR 2005), for example, were constructed from circa 1900 through the 1950s. Dwellings executed in the Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Period Cottage, Minimal Traditional and Ranch styles are the predominant property types. Most houses are frame and one- or one-and-one-half stories in height, with only a few two-story residences standing on or immediately adjacent to East Main Street. A few apartment buildings and duplexes stand among the single-family homes, and a cluster of four rental houses were constructed on McBrayer Court around 1940.²² There are small groupings of earlier vernacular homes north and south of town, and a limited amount of mill housing survives within the city limits.

²⁰ Catherine W. Bishir, Michael T. Southern and Jennifer F. Martin. *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 173-175.

²¹ Megan D. Eades and Brian R. Eades, "Central School Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2001.

²² Heather Fearnbach, "East Main Street Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2005.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the West Main Historic District are indicated by the heavy, bold line on the enclosed map. Scale 1" = 200'

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the West Main Street Historic District are drawn to encompass the greatest concentration of contributing domestic, religious, funerary, educational and recreational resources constructed on or adjacent to West Main Street during the period of significance. The area immediately outside the district is characterized by later residential and commercial development.

Photograph Catalog

All photographs by Heather Fearnbach, Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., 3334 Nottingham Road, Winston-Salem, NC, on September 27, 2005. Negatives located at the North Carolina SHPO, Western Office, Asheville.

1. Streetscape, South Side West Main Street
2. Cool Springs Cemetery, 121 Cool Springs Drive
3. Cool Springs Gymnasium, 121 Memorial Drive
4. Lovelace-Ragin House, 450 West Main Street
5. Frank B. and Mae Bridges Wilkins House, 363 West Main Street
6. McMurry-Bodie House, 419 West Main Street
7. First Presbyterian Church, 438 West Main Street
8. Crown Service Station, 431 West Main Street